

ARUBA TODAY

Friday
July 7, 2023

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Aruba's English news leader and ultimate guide to paradise

Earth hit an unofficial record high temperature this week – and stayed there

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** and **ISABELLA O'MALLEY**
Associated Press

Sweltering heat is blanketing much of the planet, and one unofficial analysis says the past seven days have been the hottest week on record, the latest grim milestone in a series of climate-change-driven extremes.

On Thursday, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration distanced itself from the designation, compiled by the University of Maine's Climate Reanalyzer, which uses satellite data and computer simulations to measure the world's condition.

That metric showed that Earth's average temperature on Wednesday remained at an unofficial record high, 62.9 degrees Fahrenheit (17.18 degrees Celsius), set the day before.

Continued on Page 2



A man cools off at an urban beach at Madrid Rio park in Madrid, Spain, Monday, June 26, 2023. Associated Press

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Earth hit an unofficial record high temperature this week – and stayed there

Continued from Front

And for the seven-day period ending Wednesday, the daily average temperature was .08 degrees Fahrenheit (.04 degrees Celsius) higher than any week in 44 years of record-keeping, according to Climate Reanalyzer data. Though the figures are unofficial, many scientists agree they indicate climate change is reaching uncharted territory. And the White House said the data show the need for legislative action.

"The alarming extreme weather events impacting millions of Americans underscore the urgency of President Biden's climate agenda and the absurdity of continued efforts by Republican lawmakers to block and repeal it," spokesman Abdullah Hasnan said.

NOAA, whose figures are considered the gold standard in climate data, said in a statement Thursday that it cannot validate the unofficial numbers. It noted that the reanalyzer uses model output data, which it called "not suitable" as substitutes for actual temperatures and climate records. The agency monitors global temperatures and records on a monthly and an annual basis, not daily.



The San Antonio Fire spreads uphill west of Petaluma, Ca., Friday, June 30, 2023.

Associated Press

"We recognize that we are in a warm period due to climate change, and combined with El Nino and hot summer conditions, we're seeing record warm surface temperatures being recorded at many locations across the globe," the statement said.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the latest numbers help prove "that climate change is out of control." "If we persist in delaying key measures that are needed, I think we are moving into a catastrophic situation, as the last two records in temperature demonstrates," he said.

More frequent and more intense heat waves are disrupting life around the world and causing life-threatening temperatures. In Timbuktu, Mali — at the gateway to the Sahara

Desert — 50-year-old Fatoumata Arby said this kind of heat is new. "Usually, at night it's a bit cool even during the hot season. But this year, even at night, it's been hot — I've never seen anything like it," said Arby, who rarely leaves her hometown. "I've been having heart palpitations because of the heat. I'm starting to think seriously that I'm going to leave Timbuktu."

Last week, Egypt experienced one of its many summer heatwaves, with temperatures soaring above 100 degrees Fahrenheit (37.7 degrees Celsius), according to the country's national weather forecaster. To combat heat and humidity, children on Thursday frolicked in the Nile River while pedestrians hunted the shade. People

are also feeling the effects in Nouakchot, Mauritania's capital city, on the shores of the Atlantic. For Abdalahi Sy, a 56-year-old farmer who works in the market gardens, environmental changes have reduced his already-meager income.

"I have a small shelter built from wooden poles and scraps of cloth. I take refuge there when the heat becomes unbearable," said Sy, who tries to work from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m., or noon at the latest. "After that ... I practically can't move because of the heat." Customers don't venture out until 5 p.m. or later to buy fertilizer and vegetables.

He cited a scarcity of water and quality feed for livestock as causes for illness and even miscarriage among animals: "It is clear that we are facing profound changes in our environment. The earth is becoming less fertile and less generous."

Overall, one of the largest contributors to this week's heat records is an exceptionally mild winter in the Antarctic. Parts of the continent and nearby ocean were 18-36 degrees Fahrenheit (10-20 degrees Celsius) higher than averages from 1979 to 2000.

"Temperatures have been

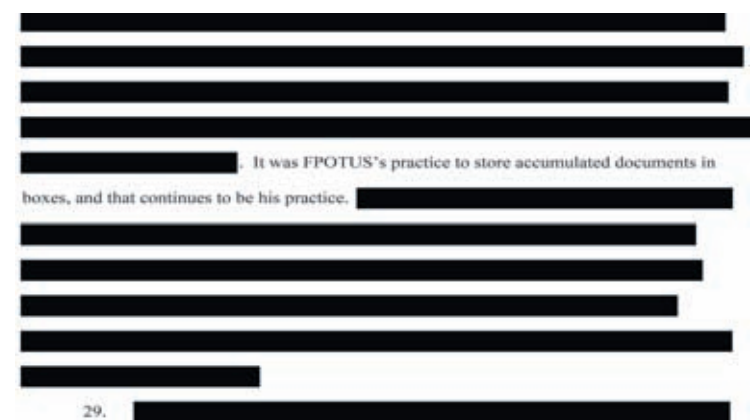
unusual over the ocean and especially around the Antarctic this week, because wind fronts over the Southern Ocean are strong pushing warm air deeper south," said Raghu Murtugudde, professor of atmospheric, oceanic and earth system science at the University of Maryland and visiting faculty at the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay.

Chari Vijayaraghavan, a polar explorer and educator who has visited the Arctic and Antarctic regularly for the past 10 years, said global warming is obvious at both poles and threatens the region's wildlife as well as driving ice melt that raises sea levels.

"Warming climates might lead to increasing risks of diseases such as the avian flu spreading in the Antarctic that will have devastating consequences for penguins and other fauna in the region," Vijayaraghavan said.

Katharine Hayhoe, The Nature Conservancy chief scientist and a climate scientist at Texas Tech, said: "This is one more reminder of the inexorable upward trend that will only be halted by decisive actions to wean ourselves off fossil fuels, invest in nature, and achieve net zero." □

In Trump case, Justice Dept. unseals previously blacked-out portions from search warrant application



A portion of the affidavit in support of a warrant to search former President Donald Trump's Mar-a-lago estate in Palm Beach, Fla., released by the Justice Department, is photographed July 5, 2023.

Associated Press

By ERIC TUCKER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department on

Wednesday disclosed some of the previously blacked-out portions of a warrant application it submitted last year to gain authorization to search former President Donald Trump's Florida property for classified documents.

Key portions of the document had already been made public, but media organizations including The Associated Press had pressed for further unsealing in light of a 38-count indictment last month charging Trump and his valet, Walt Nauta, with concealing classified re-

ports at Mar-a-Lago from investigators. A magistrate judge, Bruce Reinhart, declined to order the Justice Department to unseal the search warrant affidavit in its entirety but did require prosecutors to publicly file a less-redacted affidavit.

The newly revealed paragraphs lay out important evidence that prosecutors had gathered well before the search took place, recounting how surveillance footage from inside the property showed dozens of boxes being relocated by a Trump aide in the days before FBI and Justice De-

partment investigators visited the home to collect records.

During that June 3, 2022 visit, law enforcement officials were handed an envelope of 38 classified documents and told that all records sought by a subpoena were being turned over and that a "diligent search" of the home had been done. But investigators had reason to believe that was not true based on the relocation of boxes that they had observed on video, and that additional records remained at the house. □

U.S. senators seek expanded compensation for those exposed to nuclear fallout

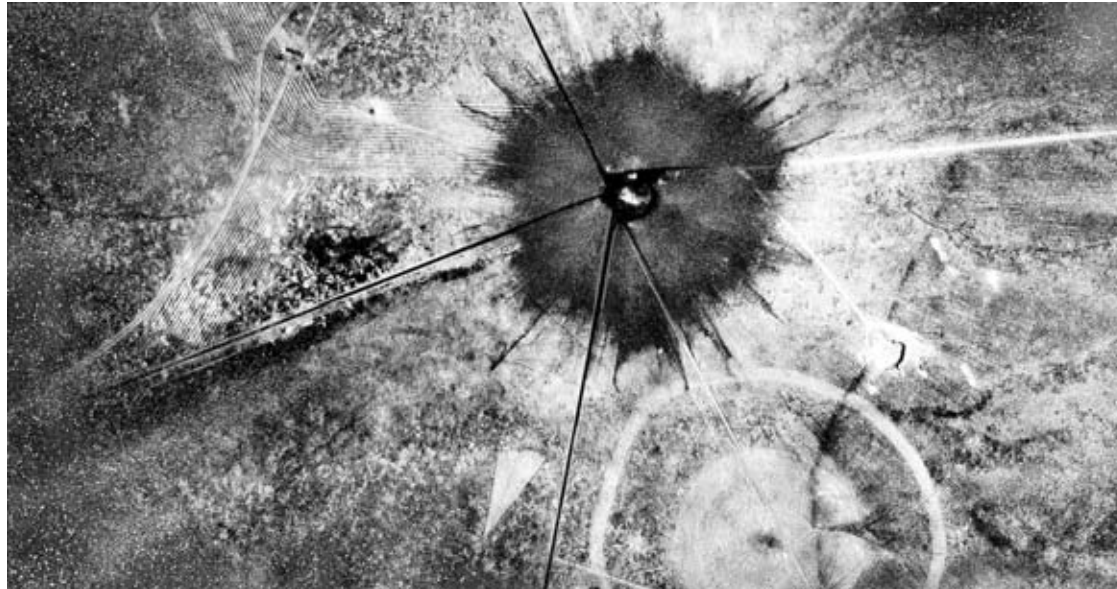
By S. MONTOYA BRYAN
Associated Press

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)

— U.S. senators from New Mexico and Idaho are making another push to expand the federal government's compensation program for people exposed to radiation following uranium mining and nuclear testing carried out during the Cold War.

Downwinders who live near the New Mexico site where the world's first atomic bomb was tested in 1945 as part of the top-secret Manhattan Project in World War II also would be among those added to the list.

The legislation would amend the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to include eligible residents in areas affected by fallout in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Utah and the territory of Guam. Democrat Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico and Republican Mike Crapo of Idaho announced Thursday that they were reintroducing the bill in the Senate after previous attempts to expand the program stalled. The measure also has been introduced in the U.S. House, with supporters saying the clock is ticking as more people are diagnosed with cancers that



This July 16, 1945, photo shows an aerial view after the first atomic explosion at Trinity Test Site, N.M. Associated Press

they say are connected to exposure.

Lawmakers are hoping that momentum gained last year following bipartisan approval of legislation that prevented the compensation program from expiring can be tapped to expand the program and ensure that it doesn't expire as scheduled next summer.

The challenge will be getting more Republicans to support the legislation, said Tina Cordova, a cancer survivor and co-founder of the New Mexico-based advocacy group Tularosa Basin Downwinders Consortium. She said many people who would benefit from

expanded coverage are in states represented by GOP lawmakers.

Cordova said radiation exposure continues to affect the latest generation of families who were exposed to fallout from nuclear weapons testing. She pointed to her niece, a 23-year-old college student who recently was diagnosed with thyroid cancer, and the 2-year-old granddaughter of a Tularosa family who had an eye removed due to cancer.

"New Mexico has been asked to do so much," said Cordova, noting the state's role in development of the nation's nuclear arsenal

and in the disposal of the resulting waste. "We bear the brunt of this and they still won't recognize that we were the first people to be exposed to radiation from an atomic bomb and no one has looked back." Advocates have been trying for years to bring awareness to the lingering effects of nuclear fallout surrounding the Trinity Site in southern New Mexico and on the Navajo Nation, where millions of tons of uranium ore were extracted over decades to support U.S. nuclear activities.

Under the legislation, eligibility also would be expanded to include certain

workers in the industry after 1971, such as miners.

The reintroduction of the legislation precedes the 78th anniversary of the Trinity Test in New Mexico on July 16 and comes as the federal government prepares to ramp up production of the plutonium pits used to trigger nuclear weapons.

Crapo said that while extending the compensation program for another two years is critical, more needs to be done to address the health effects of fallout from nuclear testing for his constituents in Idaho and elsewhere in the West.

For Luján, amending the compensation act has been a long battle. As a member of the U.S. House, he has introduced the legislation in each session since first being elected in 2008.

"Through no fault of their own," Luján said, "these workers and nearby communities were exposed to radiation as part of our national defense effort, impacting generations to come without providing the same relief available to other communities included under RECA."

Since the program began in 1992, more than 54,000 claims have been filed and about \$2.6 billion has been

Nevada secures \$285M opioid settlement with Walgreens

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The state of Nevada has reached a \$285 million settlement with Walgreens regarding the pharmacy chain's role in the opioid epidemic, the state's top lawyer announced Wednesday.

The last in a series of multi-year settlements with pharmaceutical companies, retailers and others, it pushes Nevada's total anticipated payments stemming from opioid claims to \$1.1 billion, state Attorney General Aaron Ford's office said in a news release. Nevada is among numerous states that have reached settle-

ments now totaling more than \$50 billion nationwide. "When I first took office as attorney general, I made it clear that seeking justice for those harmed by the opioid epidemic was one of my top priorities," Ford said.

Walgreens had no comment on the settlement, a company spokesman said in an email to The Associated Press on Wednesday. Walgreens is the final defendant named in a lawsuit the state filed in 2019, Ford's office said.

The \$285 million settlement will be paid over 15 years

and will be split between the state and the signatories of the One Nevada Agreement, a coalition of Nevada county and city governments, Ford said.

The state will retain about \$98.1 million, which will be placed in a fund that was created to help finance opioid recovery programs through the state Department of Health and Human Services. The coalition will receive about \$116.2 million.

The state reached a \$193 million agreement with Teva Pharmaceuticals in June and a \$152 million



Nevada Attorney General Aaron Ford gestures during an interview in Las Vegas, on Dec. 14, 2018. Associated Press

deal with CVS in May. Much of the more than \$50 billion obtained through settlements nationwide is

to be used to deal with an overdose crisis linked to more than 100,000 deaths a year in the U.S. □

New York City's Rikers Island, facing possible federal takeover

By **JAKE OFFENHARTZ**

NEW YORK (AP) — Facing the looming prospect of a federal takeover, New York City's troubled Rikers Island jail complex is failing to meet a court-ordered requirement to properly clean and maintain its facilities, according to a new report issued by a federal monitor.

In a progress report released Thursday, the monitor described a decrepit jail complex where detainees are forced to live in damp, fetid quarters infested with mold, vermin and other "generally unsanitary" conditions.

Despite some progress toward collaboration, the monitor — a court-created body known as the Office of Compliance Consultants — found thousands of open violations inside the jail, ranging from "chronic pooling" of water, clogged vents limiting air flow and the persistent smell of sew-



The Rikers Island jail complex stands with the Manhattan skyline in the background on June 20, 2014, in New York.

Associated Press

age. One detainee complained his cell was full of mice "because there's no dust pan on unit to properly pick up the trash,"

The report also faulted jail leaders for failing to maintain key infrastructure, including a sprinkler system that was out of service during an April fire that injured five people. The broken system was only disclosed after the monitor inquired about the extent of the damage, according to the report.

The findings represent the latest setback for the notorious city-run jail system, and could undercut Mayor Eric Adams' argument that his administration should remain in control of the complex at a moment when a federal judge is considering putting Rikers Island in receivership.

The possibility of a federal takeover, an extraordinary step, follows a report from a separate monitor that uncovered a pattern of disturbing incidents — includ-

ing detainee deaths and gruesome injuries — that correction officials failed to report.

Mayor Adams has defended his stewardship of Rikers Island, arguing that his administration is working to stabilize a jail system that spiraled into chaos during the pandemic.

On Thursday, a spokesperson for the city's Department of Correction said the jail's facilities were cleaned three times daily, adding the agency was in the process of updating its internal tracking procedures. Correctional leaders are also working with a fire safety consultant to enhance its safety procedures, the spokesperson said.

The latest report stems from a 1975 class action lawsuit challenging "environmental conditions" inside Rikers Island. As part of an agreement, the city agreed to meet certain requirements around sanitary practices,

ventilation systems, and fire safety.

The monitor has frequently found the city in violation of those orders, leading to admonishments and promises of reform. In the latest monitoring period, which covered the first four months of this year, "the only aspect of the Court's order that the Department substantially complied with is providing a sink," according to the monitor.

Lauren Stephens-Davidowitz, a staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society, said the lack of urgency around the issue was further proof the city was ill-equipped to care for its incarcerated population.

"There's a disregard for the health and well being of the people living at Rikers Island," she said. "The report describes completely unacceptable, dangerous and disgusting conditions in a place that over 6,000 people call home." □

TikTok and 5 content creators ask federal judge to block Montana from banning app

By **AMY BETH HANSON**

Associated Press

TikTok Inc. and a group of five content creators who are suing the state of Montana over its first-in-the-nation law to ban the video sharing app are now asking a federal judge to block implementation of the law while the case moves through the courts and before it takes effect in January.

The separate requests for preliminary injunctions were filed Wednesday in federal court in Missoula. The cases challenging the law were filed in May and have since been consolidated by U.S. District Judge Donald Molloy.

Montana Attorney General Austin Knudsen had the bill drafted over concerns shared by the FBI and U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken that the app, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, could be used to allow the

Chinese government to access information on U.S. citizens or push pro-Beijing misinformation that could influence the public. TikTok has said none of this has ever happened.

The motions for injunctions make the same arguments as the cases against the state that the ban is an unconstitutional violation of free speech rights and that the state has no authority to regulate foreign affairs. Attorneys on both sides have agreed to a schedule that calls for the state to respond to the motions by mid-August and for the plaintiffs to file their replies by mid-September, court records state.

The company and the Montana content creators argue a preliminary injunction should be granted because the plaintiffs are likely to succeed in their challenges to the law and if the ban took effect it would cause irreparable

harm by depriving them of the ability to express themselves and communicate with others.

TikTok has safeguards to moderate content and protect minors, and would not share information with China, the company has argued. But critics have pointed to China's 2017 national intelligence law that compels companies to cooperate with the country's governments for state intelligence work. "TikTok users don't use the app the app uses them and turns them into a spying apparatus for the Chinese Communist Party," Emily Flower, a spokeswoman for the Attorney General's Office, said in a statement that also noted recent reporting that TikTok is paying for the lawsuit filed by the content creators. "TikTok's 'support' is bought and paid for by Montanans recognize the threat that the app poses to their privacy and nation-

al security." More than half the U.S. states, including Montana, and the federal government have banned TikTok from government-owned devices. Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signed the bill into law in

May, saying Montana was taking "the most decisive action of any state to protect Montanans' private data and sensitive personal information from being harvested by the Chinese Communist Party." □



In this photo provided by the Montana Governor's Office, Republican Gov. Greg Gianforte signs a law banning TikTok in the state, Wednesday, May 17, 2023, in Helena, Mont.

Associated Press

The U.N. chief calls for a robust international police force to help combat Haiti's armed gangs

By EDITH M. LEDERER
Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Thursday for a robust international force to help combat Haiti's armed gangs and restore security in the impoverished nation, saying that a U.N. expert's estimate that Haiti needs up to 2,000 additional anti-gang police officers is no exaggeration.

Stressing that the U.N. is not calling for a military force or a political mission, Guterres appealed to U.N. Security Council members and potential contributing countries "to act now" to deploy a multinational force to help the Haitian National Police "defeat and dismantle the gangs."

The Caribbean nation has been asking for such a force since last October.

The U.N. chief, who visited Haiti's capital Port-au-Prince on Saturday, told reporters that criminal gangs have a "stranglehold" on the population. "The Haitian people are trapped in a living nightmare. Humanitarian conditions are beyond appalling," he said.

Guterres spoke ahead of a Security Council meeting later Thursday on his report on Haiti and follow-



U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres speaks during a press conference at the diplomatic lounge in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Saturday, July 1, 2023.

Associated Press

ing Wednesday's press conference by the U.N. independent expert for Haiti, William O'Neill, who concluded a 10-day trip to the country last week.

O'Neill estimated that Haiti needs 1,000 to 2,000 international police with expertise in organized criminal gangs and their financing, as well as in kidnappings and urban operations. He stressed that the quality of the officers is more important than the quantity.

O'Neill, an American lawyer who has been working on Haiti for over 30 years and helped establish the Haitian National Police in 1995, told reporters: "I have never seen the situation as bad as it is now."

Secretary-General Guterres, asked about O'Neill's estimate, said the right number for an international force needs to be assessed but that it should be "a meaningful number," and that he believes the

U.N. expert's numbers "do not reflect any exaggeration." He added that the police also need financing, training and equipment.

Guterres called for simultaneous action on three fronts restoring security, working toward a political solution that restores democratic institutions and addressing urgent humanitarian needs. He called on donors to respond quickly to the U.N. appeal for \$720 million to help more than

three million people, which is only 23% funded.

The U.N. chief said these three steps are vital to break Haiti's cycle of suffering and create a path out of the current crisis.

The gangs have grown in power since the July 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moïse and are now estimated to control up to 80% of the capital. The surge in killings, rapes and kidnappings has led to a violent uprising by civilian vigilante groups that have killed nearly 200 people since April in their fight against suspected gang members.

O'Neill said he met with senior Haitian National Police leaders, including the inspector general, and they told him they are committed to seriously looking at the integrity and competence of all officers and for evidence of misconduct, abuse of power, criminal activity or collusion with the gangs.

He said the inspector general told him 80 officers have been suspended and are under investigation for misconduct or criminal activity, and that police participation in a vigilante justice movement called "bwa kale" is also being investigated. □

UAE pledges \$15 million to help rebuild occupied West Bank camp



A Palestinian woman walks on a damaged road in the Jenin refugee camp in the West Bank, Wednesday, July 5, 2023, after the Israeli army withdrew its forces from the militant stronghold.

Associated Press

By TIA GOLDENBERG

Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The United Arab Emirates pledged Thursday to give \$15 million to help rebuild the Jenin refugee camp after the most intense Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank in nearly two decades.

The funding promise comes after the two-day offensive destroyed the camp's narrow roads and alleyways. The operation, meant to crack down on Palestinian militants after a series of recent attacks on Israelis, sent thousands of people fleeing their homes. Twelve Palestinians and one Israeli soldier were killed in the fighting.

The UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported that the money would be granted to UNRWA, the U.N. agency that assists Palestinian refugees, to rebuild damaged homes and businesses and for the agency's services. UNRWA has struggled recently to raise the funding it needs to keep its day-to-day operations helping millions of people across the Middle East.

Israel's fierce incursion this week saw bulldozers tearing through streets to clear a path for the hundreds of soldiers deployed. Israel withdrew its troops on Wednesday, revealing a scene of destruction.

Roads in the densely populated area of some 24,000 people were chewed up, with piles of broken asphalt, stones and rocks lying on the sides. Cars, some overturned on the sides of roads, were smashed and scorched. □

The death toll from a South Africa gas leak blamed on illegal gold processing has risen to 17

By **MOGOMOTSI MAGOME** and **GERALD IMRAY**

Associated Press

BOKSBURG, South Africa (AP) —

The death toll from a toxic gas leak that authorities blamed on an illegal gold processing operation in South Africa rose to 17, including three children, as police removed canisters from a community of closely packed shacks and sifted through evidence Thursday.

The leak of what authorities said was a toxic nitrate gas happened Wednesday night in the informal Angelo settlement in Boksburg, a city on the eastern outskirts of Johannesburg.

The three children who died were ages 1, 6 and 15, police said. At least 10 people were hospitalized, including a 2-month-old baby, two 4 year olds and a 9 year old, according to Panyaza Lesufi, the premier of Gauteng province, who gave an update Thursday. A statement from South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's office said it was a "devastating and tragic loss of innocent lives."

Bodies remained on the ground, some of them covered in sheets or blankets, for hours after the gas leak was reported around 8



South African police officers remove gas cylinders used by illegal gold miners in the Angelo Informal Settlement in Boksburg, South Africa, Thursday July 6, 2023.

Associated Press

p.m. Wednesday as emergency service responders waited for forensic investigators and pathologists to do their work.

"It's not a nice scene at all. ... It's painful, emotionally draining and tragic," Lesufi was quoted as saying in news reports as he visited the settlement on Wednesday night. An Associated Press journalist saw a forensic investigator covering the body of a small child with a blanket. Another body, covered in a white cloth with a shoe sticking

out, lay under a strip of yellow police tape cordoning off the area. The bodies eventually were removed. Search teams combed the area deep into the night looking for other possible casualties. Authorities didn't say if the people engaged in the illegal gold processing thought to have caused the gas leak were among the dead, but police opened a criminal case. Investigators made their way through narrow alleys between shacks and other makeshift homes that

were dark due to a lack of streetlights, a common situation in the deeply impoverished informal settlements found in and around South Africa's cities.

Emergency services spokesman William Ntladi said the deaths were caused by the inhalation of nitrate gas that leaked from a gas cylinder being kept in a shack where illegal miners were separating gold from rock and dirt. He said the leak had emptied the canister. Lesufi, the Gauteng premier, tweeted videos that

showed the dusty inside of the shack and at least four gas cylinders on metal stands. The footage included what Lesufi said was the cylinder that leaked lying on the floor next to the shack's entrance.

The search teams concentrated on an area stretching out 100 meters (yards) from the cylinder to check for more dead or injured people, Ntladi said.

Police later began tearing down the shack, and Lesufi said all gas cylinders were removed from the site.

Illegal mining is rife in the gold-rich areas around Johannesburg, where miners go into closed off and disused mines to search for any deposits left over. They then attempt to process some of that gold in secret, often in makeshift and highly dangerous facilities. Mining fatalities underground are also common and the South African government department responsible for mining announced recently that at least 31 illegal miners were believed to have died in a gas explosion in a disused mine in the city of Welkom in central South Africa in May. The cause was methane gas, the mining department said. □

Dutch museums will return art and artifacts that were looted from Sri Lanka and Indonesia



In this photo provided by Rijksmuseum on Thursday, July 6, 2023, the Cannon of Kandy which originated from Sri Lanka is photographed.

Associated Press

By **MIKE CORDER**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands

(AP) — Two Dutch museums are handing hundreds of cultural artifacts back to Indonesia and Sri Lanka from a richly decorated cannon to precious metals and jewelry that were taken, often by force, in the colonial era. The government announced the planned restitution of 478 "cultural objects" Thursday. Some Western nations are returning looted artifacts and other objects as part

of a reckoning with their often brutal colonial histories. A Berlin museum announced in January it is ready to return hundreds of human skulls from the former German colony of East Africa. In 2021, France said it was returning statues, royal thrones and sacred altars taken from the West African nation of Benin. And last year, Belgium returned a gold-capped tooth belonging to the slain Congolese independence hero Patrice Lumumba. "This is a historic moment. It

is the first time that, based on the advice of the Advisory Committee on the Return of Cultural Objects from Colonial Context, we are returning objects that should never have been in the Netherlands," said State Secretary for Culture and Media Gunay Uslu. The committee was set up in 2022 to assess requests by countries for restitution of artifacts in state museums. It is considering more restitution requests from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nigeria. □

Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called *Did you know about...?*, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.



Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin
On the 10-florin bill, you can see a *Turtuga blanco* (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called *Shoshoro*. The birds *Trupiaal*, *Shoco*, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a *Purun di ceramica* (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the *Cododo* (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), *Cangu di tera* (land crab), *Willem III Tower*, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called *Banana di rif*. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the *Yuwana* (Iguana), *Aloe*, *Toteki* (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the *Baile di cinta* (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a

value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the *Dornasol* and the *Warawara*—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the *Tuna cactus* plant, and the *Caha di orgel* (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word "florin" supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies.

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba. □



Paseo Herencia is always fun and exciting to visit



NOORD— Paseo Herencia offers a variety of shopping, dining and entertainment options in an outdoor center located in the heart of Palm Beach – walking distance from the high-rise hotels.

Shopping

The Paseo Herencia stores offer a great collection in beach wear, clothing, perfume, shoes, jewelry, souvenirs and much more. Pamper yourself by visiting Maggy's and enjoy their salon services and shop for your favorite beauty products. Aruba Aloe has that perfect gift to bring back home, all made with natural ingredients. Other brand favorites are Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, Aldo, Carmen Steffens, Nike store, Pandora and many more.

Restaurants

Start with a breakfast meal at Paseo Herencia offering unique breakfast options such as Drunk's Denial with their Make it Your Own Crêpe Bar offering sweet and savory crêpe flavors and the option to booze it up with their Mimosa crêpe (mandarin soaked in champagne), Pina Colada (pineapples in coconut rum), Bourbon Apple, Brandy Apricot, Whiskey Pear and more. Location can be found by following the bakery smell upon arrival. Another option is Seabarita offering you delicious breakfast options ranging from Huevos Rancheros to empanadas surrounded by a cozy picnic setting with street-side view. Go Argentinian style at Che Bar and try their delicious omelet with chorizo/ham, mozzarella, onions, peppers, and tomatoes served with skillet potatoes and toast. Looking for something for the whole family? Visit TGI Fridays and choose between waffle, omelets, breakfast sandwiches and tacos starting at \$8. These restaurants are also open



for lunch & dinner offering you a variety of cuisine choices. If you're looking for more unique concepts, join us for dinner at Xixon Restaurant greatly known in Miami for their Spanish inspired dishes with top notch flavors and the largest wine variety or visit The Lazy Turtle and try their exotic African dish "Kuvuta Kuku" accompanied by their tasty lazy cocktails. Coming for drinks? Sip and have a good time at the Bulldog Aruba located in the center of the Plaza. Open till late.

VIP Cinema

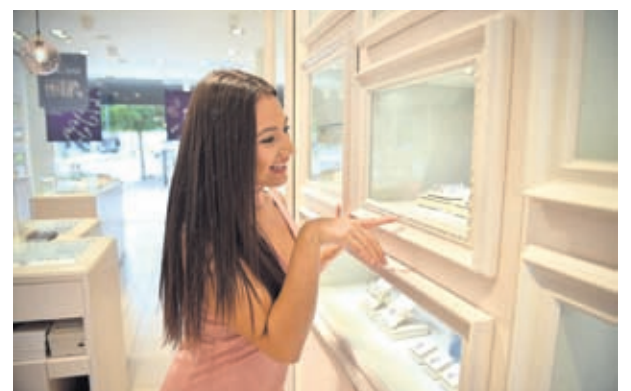
Visit the one-of-a-kind Caribbean Cinemas VIP on the second floor of Paseo Herencia and enjoy your favorite movies in the most comfortable reclining seats with high quality screens with the latest projection and 7.1 Dolby surround sound and not to forget their delicious buttery bag of popcorn.

Entertainment

Catch live shows from Monday to Thursday and Sunday at 8pm on the Paseo center stage and the nightly water shows at 7:30pm, 8:30pm and 9:30pm. Looking for some adrenaline? Visit the Airsoft experience located behind The Lazy Turtle. Snap Instagramable pictures at the Angel Wings located between Pandora and Free Spirit or the Flying mosaic hearts located behind King Churros.

Parking up to two hours is free when shopping, dining or catching a movie at Paseo Herencia. Just present your purchase receipt at our parking cashier.

To learn more about our specials and events, visit the Paseo Herencia website www.paseoherencia.com.



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Exploring the Mainstreet of San Nicolas

SAN NICOLAS— At Just 11 miles south-east from Oranjestad you will enter the city San Nicolas, also known as Sunrise City or Chocolate City. A city that is rich in authentic culture and island charm. San Nicolas is Aruba's second largest city and was once a bustling company town dominated by the oil industry since the early 1930's.

Over the course of four decades, its demographics had changed immensely due to a stream of Afro-Caribbean and South American workers who came to fill the jobs in the oil refinery between the 1920's until the 1960's. To this day traces of the multicultural influences in culinary offerings and customs, housing and population are clearly visible in San Nicolas - more than anywhere else on the island.

Flow of history

if you are looking for history San Nicolas has it. Here you will find three amazing museums, The Museum of Industry, the Community Museum and the Carnival Euphoria, all within walking distance from one another.

The Museum of Industry is situated in the Water Tower in San Nicolas and narrates Aruba's industrial history which began in the 19th century. Here you will learn about gold, aloe, phosphate, oil and the tourism industries which made San Nicolas once a bustling business center. Experience the touching stories of those who were part of this history.

Nicolaas Store built in 1940 and renovated in 2014 is the home of the Community Museum. The collection is remarkable and spans millennia. Ancient fossils stand next to tableaus of an authentically recreated colonial kitchen and bedroom and 19th-century barbershop, just to name a few of the items of old-time Aruba that has been preserved. A collection of artifacts and other objects of artistic, cultural, historical, or scientific importance can be found here for the purpose of education or enjoyment.

Carnival Euphoria is showcasing Aruba's Carnival. See how are Carnival has developed over the past 65 years.

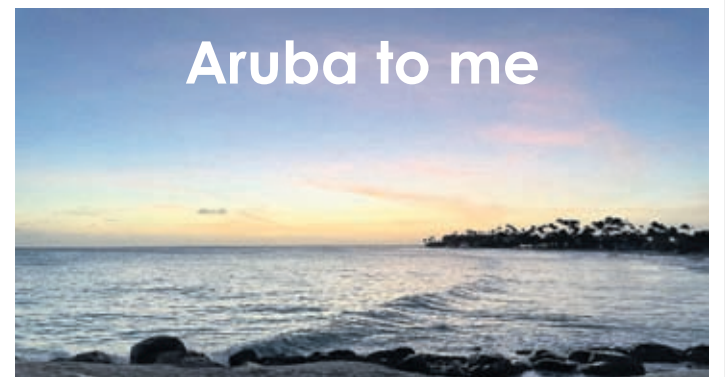


The new San Nicolas

In the shadow of the refinery, an art capital is quietly beginning to grow. This is the new San Nicolas, a place that is starting to become a magnet for all that is young, cool and hip in Aruba. Indeed, San Nicolas has all of the ingredients of an emerging cultural hub — varied history, interesting architecture, and, perhaps most importantly, an urban layout that makes it walkable. As you walk around, the streets are silent but the walls are loud, filled with bright, colorful murals painted by a collection of artists from around the world. Thanks to the efforts of various art organizations in Aruba, such as Art Rules Aruba and Aruba Art Fair, San Nicolas has had quite the aesthetic makeover with regards to vibrant street art. Each year more and more stunning murals are replacing broken down buildings with colorful art pieces that keep brightening up SunriseCity.

Must See, Do, Buy & Eat

A little bit of everything can be found in the main street. Stores selling shoes, clothing, jewelry you name it. Arts & crafts by Co-secha store & Creative Center, a design store in which you can immerse yourself in discovering genuine and locally made arts and crafts which reflect the diversification of the Aruban craft heritage and the artistic supply of artisans. Don't miss out on trying the exquisite food offered by the cafes and restaurants or just enjoy a peaceful walk admiring the murals, mosaic benches and all the history San Nicolas has to offer. □



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated com-

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Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Chloe K. Engel, from CPA.

She wrote to us saying: "Aruba to me is pure bliss! Chloe Engel, New York." Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □



Episode 14 The girl of Weburi: A Rock Art Site story

Weburi is another very interesting place situated South of Piedra Plat's Protestant Church. Weburi, as we are told stands for; boulders standing in the blowing wind. This pictograph site can also be reached going North from out the Hooiberg hill or Hay stack.

After some 500 steps you should look for some particularly round boulders. In one of them a cove has formed due to erosion with a west-facing entrance and is the rock containing a fantastic collection

of red pigmented rock Art. This amazing site has some minor difficulties to find the entrance, however once the entrance is located and one has made it inside the hollow rock bolder, the mystical drawings are all over the interior wall and can best observed.

This area is part of some man-made rain water collecting dams and conjunctions of rooi's or dry river beds. Weburi is also in the vicinity of a once large Caquetian or island Amerindian settlement that now

is known under the name of Santa Cruz, a Spanish Catholic name.

This is a story that was told to me over 30 years ago, which took place when the Calvinist Protestants decided to establish their new congregation. Piedra Plat was the place of choice and this happened during construction of the old church and the building of some houses. On an early Wednesday morning, the lady recalling the story told by grandmother: the sun had not risen yet when they



were distracted by a certain sound that appeared to be sobbing of a child.

It was not long after that everyone started to walk about with the hope to find out from where the crying sound was coming from. After a short search someone shouted, "Found her!" so everyone knew immediately now that she was a girl. She looked very badly nourished and dirty. No doubt that she was lost. Maiti knew how to speak some Spanish, Papiamentu and her Caquetian language.

Now that a few weeks had past she was amazed that she looked way much better and very nice indeed. After a few more weeks we could see that she felt secure enough to start to tell a more consistent story and why she was hiding in fear and from whom or from what was she running from and hiding in the rock formation. All happened when she arrived at Westpunt and found out from her step-uncle that her mother and her two siblings had passed away about two weeks ago one after another from food poisoning and that her father took way broken-hearted on a sail ship. So there she was with her step-uncle who, resulted to be a bad person able to use brutal force in trying to get his way with her. Luckily she had gotten away. But with difficulties on the main land and her family gone, she only knew to run and escaped all abusive intentions. For 5 days she wandered around and on the second night she slept in the cove with the drawings. You must imagine the conditions which she was in since she did not eat or drink enough since

she was dispatched some weeks earlier.

She sailed out from Adicora, Paraguaná State of Falcon in Venezuela to Aruba. The story was that she was born on Aruba but returned after a long visit of almost 4 years to her grandparents on the main land. She claimed to have had an Aruban Caquetian father and a mainland Caquetian mother who was the granddaughter of a regional prince who had the of Judibana who appeared to be a very beautiful woman. Judibana was confirmed to had lived and was the wife of regional Chief with the name of Jurijurebo and that drought and famine provoked that they sent her back to Aruba where her parents had a small Cunucu together with a cousin she called uncle. She was always proud but serene and self-conscious. In her town on the mainland everyone knew that she would become a beautiful young woman that looked exactly like dudu Judi or grand ma Judibana.

Maitirima was her name and was composed of the two words, Mai, meant water spring or an eye of water and Tirima which meant blue celeste, all that together it meant Blue-Water-Spring, who must have been of an age between 9 and 12-years-old at the time. She became a hard-working, smart and beautiful woman and got married into the Croes family of Piedra Plat and was the great-grandmother of many generations of Protestant Native Arubans.

Source; Island Insight column by Etnia Nativa.



Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his

son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island.

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock



CROSSWORD

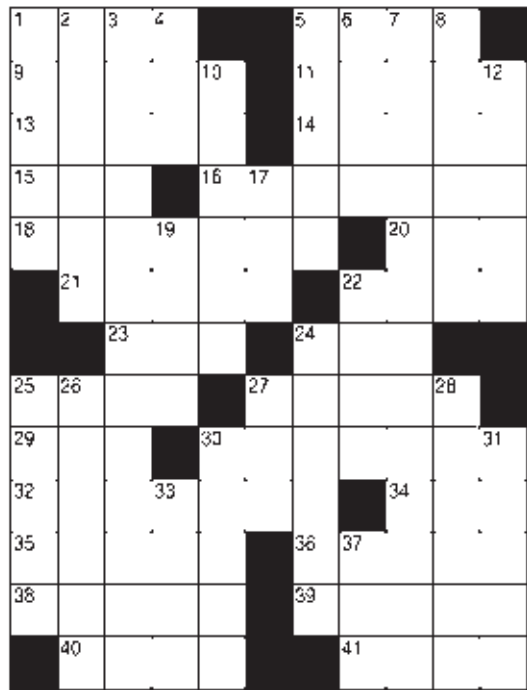
By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS** 35 Homer
 1 Diplomatic classic skill
 5 Speed Thai
 9 Love affair
 11 By the way
 13 Fencing move
 14 Singer Travis
 15 Snaky shape
 16 "The Faerie Queene" poet
 18 Some sofas
 20 Eastern "way"
 21 Gave out cards
 22 That woman's
 23 Music's — Nas X
 24 Negative link
 25 Toy store buy
 27 Football plays
 29 Greek vowel
 30 Bests
 32 Club layer
 34 Half of hex-
- 36 Korean or
 38 Incline
 39 Avignon's river
 40 Till bills
 41 Terminate



Yesterday's answer

- 8 Make beloved opera
 10 Flip
 12 Pita sandwich
 17 Sulky state
 19 Kite part
 22 Hockey's Gordie
 24 "Don't worry"
 25 Sub shops
 26 Verdi
 27 Last mo.
 28 Leave high and dry
 30 Dandies
 31 Some curves
 33 Packing need
 37 That woman



AXYDLBAAXR
 is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's. X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

7-7

CRYPTOQUOTE

OJM ERM GYRCHJ TCPO R KRES
 PT GJKT-CJRKUIRYUPM RG
 OQED RG YDJW ERM TCPO R
 KRES PT NCJRL. — CUEDRCL
 BCUVDY

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: I AM OUT WITH LANTERNS, LOOKING FOR MYSELF — EMILY DICKINSON

Millennial Money: The credit-building road with alternative credit cards could be bumpy

By MELISSA LAMBARENA of NerdWallet

Getting a first or second chance to build credit with a credit card has been easier in recent years because financial technology companies have created alternative options. These new cards often evaluate applications differently from traditional credit cards, with algorithms and proprietary methods that may put less emphasis on credit scores while looking at factors such as your income or bank account balances. Lower costs tend to be a hallmark, too: Some of these products advertise no security deposit, no annual fee and no APR.

"Many fintechs are really focused on offering products to people that otherwise would not qualify for them at a major institution," says Nick Roberts, chief marketing officer at Grow Credit, a financial technology company based in California. "There is a lot of focus with certain fintechs to expand the market." But while many of these relative newcomers can indeed help you build credit, it's worth noting that the journey might sometimes be bumpy as the company behind the card continues to scale.

EXPECT CHANGES

All credit card companies, traditional and non-traditional, are allowed to make changes to your account terms, although depending on what exactly is changing, they must follow certain guidelines. "They've got to give you a 45 days' notice of an in-



This Aug. 11, 2019 file photo shows Visa credit cards in New Orleans.

Associated Press

crease in the annual percentage rate and any significant changes in terms," says Lauren Saunders, associate director at the National Consumer Law Center. Still, compared with a more established credit card, an alternative card from a fintech is more likely to experience frequent changes to its terms and features. These updates may either be welcome additions or disappointing subtractions.

For example, a relatively new credit card company might rebrand, meaning any number of features may change. CreditStacks announced a namesake credit card in 2018, but by 2020, the company and card were going by the name Jasper, sending out redesigned cards and expanding the pool of applicants who might qualify. It later pivoted to being a cash-back card for people with good credit. Since that rebrand, Jasper's credit card has been discontinued. Grow Credit launched a

credit card in some states in 2019, eventually taking it nationwide in 2020. The card lets you build credit by using it to pay select bills, up to a low monthly spending limit. It's linked to a membership plan with various tiers and prices, including a free option. But at launch, the card had only a single free tier. The company added the other membership levels which may unlock additional qualifying bills and higher monthly spending limits over time. These additions created more credit-building options for those without credit, according to Roberts.

KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR IN-BOX

TomoCredit, a fintech based in San Francisco, has also made significant changes to its credit card's original terms. The card debuted in 2021 with no annual fee but by 2023, the terms included a \$2.99 monthly fee and the card went on a waitlist. The fintech Petal has been in the credit card space for several years, advertising low- and no-fee cards for customers looking to build credit, as well as those with good credit. Jamie Howard, an e-learning director based in Tennessee, was among those cardholders. He was told that he'd have to pay an \$8 monthly charge or opt out and have his account closed. □

Lavish tomb in ancient Spain belonged to a woman, new research shows

By **CHRISTINA LARSON**
AP Science Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) —

When archaeologists first discovered the 5,000-year-old ornate tomb in Spain, they assumed it was for a man. It held a rock crystal dagger, ivory tusks and other lavish items. But now they've determined the remains are those of a woman, and all it took was two teeth.

The researchers used a new method of determining sex that analyzes tooth enamel. This technique, developed about five years ago, is more reliable than analyzing skeletal remains in poor condition, according to their study published Thursday in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

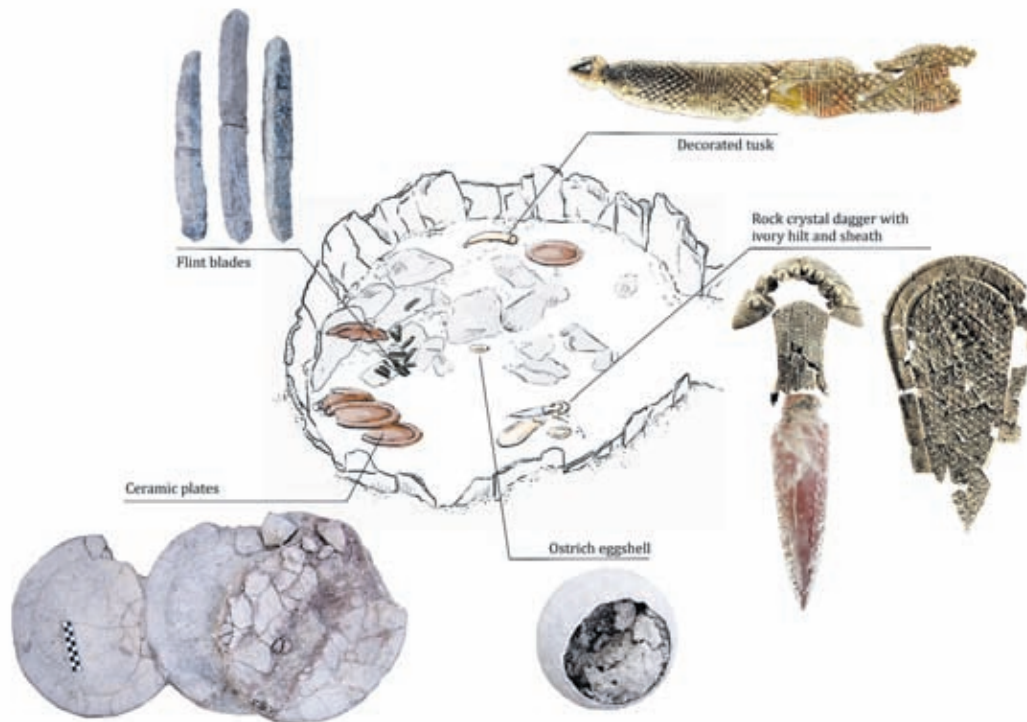
Most details about the life of the "Ivory Lady," as researchers dubbed her, remain a mystery but there are some clues.

"She was buried alone in a tomb with very special artifacts," said Leonardo Garcia Sanjuan, a co-author and archaeologist at the University of Seville in Spain. "That shows that she was a special person."

The tomb is located a few miles west of Seville, near Spain's southern coast, and was excavated in 2008. Archaeologists thought it contained a young man based on an examination of the poorly preserved bones and the fact that several precious items found in the tomb including ostrich eggshells and amber along with the tusks and dagger indicated that the individual held a high social status.

The new technique detects differences in the chemistry of tooth enamel between males and females and can be used even when full DNA is not available.

"This research provides one more piece of evidence questioning old historical narratives," said Alison Beach, an historian at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, who was not in-



This image provided by the ATLAS research group of the University of Seville in July 2023 describes items discovered in a tomb in Valencina, Spain, dated between 3,200 and 2,200 years ago. Associated Press

cluded in the study. It shows that "it's not exclusively true that men have always been the most revered or held the most authority." Marta Cintas-Pena, a co-author and archaeologist at the University of Seville, maintains a database of Copper Age burials found at 21 different archaeological sites on the Iberian Peninsula, which includes Spain and Portugal. It currently has records for 1,723 individuals.

"The Ivory Lady's burial stands out, head and shoulders, above everyone else there is absolutely no known male or female burial that compares to hers," said Garcia Sanjuan. For around 250 years after the Ivory Lady's burial, newer graves were built around hers but always with a 100-foot (30-meter) buffer zone, he said. And around 80 years after her death, people reentered her tomb and placed ad-

ditional votive objects inside, including the crystal dagger. □



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Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
Acc. #23951903
RBC Royal Bank Acc. #1330772

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An already full-tilt movie franchise turns it up a notch in ‘Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning’

By **JAKE COYLE**

AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There are, as a rule, only so many places you can go as an action movie after leaving Tom Cruise clinging to the side of an Airbus A400M and flinging him out a cargo plane at 25,000 feet. But in the kinetic, headlong world of “Mission: Impossible,” the pressure to keep upping the ante like the films’ always-running star never stops.

“Every time we finish a movie, the first thing Tom says to me is: We can do better,” says Christopher McQuarrie.

McQuarrie, the writer-director of 2015’s “Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation” and the 2018 franchise high point, “Mission: Impossible – Fallout,” was working with Cruise on “Top Gun: Maverick” (which McQuarrie wrote) when they started talking about their ambitions for the next iteration of “Mission: Impossible.” Their plan was to make not one but two sequels: Back-to-back blockbusters that would feature even bigger stunts. Cruise envisioned a motorcycle jump-slash-skydive and a massive train sequence that McQuarrie pinned to realize. The heady experience on “Maverick,” a pop-culture juggernaut that grossed nearly \$1.5 billion worldwide, only further ratcheted up their aspirations.

“‘Top Gun: Maverick’ really taught us a lot in terms of character dynamics and the emotional payoff of the movie overall,” McQuarrie said in a recent interview. “To be making movies on this scale, you really need to think about, more than anything, the feeling that the audience is left with going away.”

A year after the box-office dominance of “Maverick,” McQuarrie and Cruise are back with another high-flying spectacle of daring-do. Similar to “Maverick,” “Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part One” is a state-of-the-art action extravaganza of old-school



Tom Cruise, left, and director Christopher McQuarrie pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film ‘Mission: Impossible - Dead Reckoning Part One’ on Thursday, June 22, 2023 in London.

technique, made with star power, practical effects and stunt work designed to prompt exclamations of “He did what?”

It was also their most nearly impossible mission yet – and not just because of, according to Paramount Pictures, the 500 skydives and 13,000 motocross jumps that Cruise did in preparation for his climactic stunt. “Dead Reckoning” was just days away from beginning production in Venice when COVID-19 cases began skyrocketing in Italy, an early epicenter.

“Mission: Impossible” was one of the first major productions to be shut down by the pandemic. Months later, Cruise and “Dead Reckoning” a globe-trotting \$290 million movie so logistically complicated that it prompted controversy for initial plans to blow up a century-old bridge in Poland led an industry-wide effort to get movie business back on line during the pandemic. An already high-stress production became even more tense. In December 2020, an audio recording leaked of Cruise yelling at two crew members for not obeying COVID-19 protocols.

“We are the gold standard,” Cruise said in the

recording. “They’re back there in Hollywood making movies right now because of us. Because they believe in us and what we’re doing.” There were numerous delays and pivots along the way. But McQuarrie says he never thought “Dead Reckoning” wouldn’t get finished.

“We just kept moving forward because if you stopped, if you were trying to find the end of the tunnel, you would just reach a place of such despair,” says McQuarrie.

McQuarrie and Cruise first collaborated on the 2008 Hitler assassination drama “Valkyrie.” McQuarrie, the famed screenwriter of “The Usual Suspects,” was then in proverbial movie jail for his poorly received directorial debut, “The Way of the Gun.”

“When I met Tom in 2006, I had not directed a film in seven years,” McQuarrie says.

“I wouldn’t direct a film again for another five years. I had really put any ambitions I had to direct out of my mind. I certainly never imagined being considered an action director, let alone directing four action films.”

“In ‘Dead Reckoning,’ you’re seeing the ghosts

of all the movies that I was never allowed to make,” he adds.

Unlikely as it may be, McQuarrie (who’s also directing the already-shooting part two of “Dead Reckoning”) has emerged as the architect of one of the most visceral action franchises. “Another lesson we took from ‘Top Gun’ was: What is the audience bringing to the movie? ‘Top Gun’ came out of Cold War anxieties.

I said to Tom in 2019: What anxiety is it now?” says McQuarrie. “What we didn’t anticipate was the level to which it would accelerate.”

In “Mission: Impossible,” what you see is rarely what you get. Hunt and his team of spies are masters of deception. At the same time, McQuarrie and his crew, including cinematographer Fraser Taggart, go to considerable lengths to ensure what the audience is watching feels authentic and immersive.

“The challenge normally is hiding the fact that it’s not the actor doing it,” says McQuarrie. “And here the reverse is the case. You’re actually going to great lengths to show that Tom’s actually doing it.”

Taggart, who had shot the

helicopter sequence in “Fallout,” says he’s never worked with an actor so resistant to stunt doubles as Cruise even in the most innocuous of shots.

“Tom won’t do it. He just refuses, even to the extent of you’ll do an insert of hand,” says Taggart. “It can’t be anyone else doing it, as you would on other projects. Tom will insist that’s him.”

Just as “Top Gun: Maverick” strove to get as many cameras in the cockpits of fighter jets, the set-pieces of “Mission: Impossible” are choreographed to get cameras as close to Cruise and the cast here that includes Haley Atwell, Rebecca Ferguson and Vanessa Kirby as possible.

For Taggart, that meant getting his head around often dizzying challenges like shooting a scene involving a train moving 60 miles an hour through a mountainous Scandinavian landscape with uncontrollable weather conditions. He didn’t want just fixed cameras.

“So now we’ve got to get a whole camera crew involved and some lighting and we’ll probably end up with 10 people strapped to the top of a train carriage, including an old-fashioned physical camera up there,” says Taggart.

“You think: Can we actually get 10 people on top of the train doing 60 miles an hour? That’s the challenge because you’d really like all of your crew and actors to survive the shoot.”

In another sequence with characters inside a falling train cabin, they suspended a camera operator, Chunky Richmond, on stunt wires so he was hanging alongside the actors. For a nighttime chase through the byzantine passageways of Venice — for Taggart one of the most complex tasks of “Dead Reckoning” because of the inherent darkness of the city — they knocked on doors everywhere along the route to get cameras on terraces and pointed out windows. □

Wimbledon is finally dry after 3 days of rain. Wawrinka wins and gets Djokovic next

By CHRIS LEHOURITES

AP Sports Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP)

— The courts are finally dry at Wimbledon and the sun is even shining through the clouds at times, giving organizers hope of fitting in a full day of tennis on Thursday for the first time at this year's tournament.

The first three days of action at the All England Club were affected by rain. Only eight matches were completed on Tuesday. Those matches were played on either Centre Court or No. 1 Court, the only stadiums on the grounds with roofs.

Because of the all the disruption, there were a handful of first-round matches played on Day 4. Normally, the first Thursday of the tournament would wrap up the second round.

Among the winners was Stan Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion from Switzerland. Wawrinka beat No. 29-seeded Tomas Martin Etcheverry of Argentina 6-3, 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 to advance to the third round.

The 38-year-old Wawrinka, who won his major titles at the other three Grand Slam tournaments, will next face Novak Djokovic — the 23-time Grand Slam champion who is going for his record-tying eighth title at Wimbledon. That match is



Switzerland's Stan Wawrinka returns to Argentina's Tomas Martin Etcheverry in a men's singles match on day four of the Wimbledon tennis championships in London, Thursday, July 6, 2023.

Associated Press

scheduled to be played Friday on Centre Court.

"There's zero opportunity to win Wimbledon for me, I think," said Wawrinka, who reached the quarterfinals at the All England Club in 2014 and 2015. "I'm playing better each match, and as I say, I think it's an honor to play Novak here. I was missing that on my career to play him in the Grand Slam in Wimbledon. That's the last I never played him, and it's going to be a difficult challenge.

"Hopefully I can make a

competitive match, but if you will look at recent results, I don't really stand a chance."

The defending champion in the women's tournament, Elena Rybakina, moved into the third round by beating Alize Cornet 6-2, 7-6 (2). Fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula defeated Cristina Bucsa 6-1, 6-4.

Later Thursday, two-time champion Andy Murray was playing fifth-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas on Centre Court in the second round.

Alexander Zverev, who

reached the 2020 U.S. Open final but missed most of last season after injuring his ankle in the French Open semifinals, finally got on court and beat Dutch qualifier Gijs Brouwer 6-4, 7-6 (4), 7-6 (5) in the first round.

The 19th-seeded German has twice reached the fourth round at Wimbledon, including in 2021. He again reached the French Open semifinals this year.

Fourth-seeded Casper Ruud, however, was eliminated in the second round,

losing to British hopeful Liam Broady 6-4, 3-6, 4-6, 6-3, 6-0 on Centre Court.

"In the fifth, he was just dominant," said Ruud, who reached the final at three of the last five major tournaments but has never gotten past the second round in four appearances at the All England Club. "Getting more experience here at Wimbledon is fun. Playing on Centre Court was amazing."

Also in the women's draw, Sofia Kenin and Elina Svitolina both advanced to the third round. Kenin eliminated seventh-seeded Coco Gauff in the first round, while Svitolina beat five-time Wimbledon champion Venus Williams.

Kenin, the 2020 Australian Open champion, will next face Svitolina, who is back on tour after the birth of her first child in October with husband Gael Monfils.

"I've got to figure out a good strategy against her," said Kenin, a 24-year-old American. "She gets a lot of balls back, from what I remember. I mean, she's got a big serve, big backhand. There is nothing off about her game."

Mirra Andreeva, a 16-year-old qualifier from Russia who is ranked 102nd, reached the third round in her Wimbledon debut. □

Pogacar wins Pyrenees big stage and Vingegaard claims yellow



Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard leads Slovenia's Tadej Pogacar during the sixth stage of the Tour de France cycling race over 145 kilometers (90 miles) with start in Tarbes and finish in Cauterets-Cambasque, France, Thursday, July 6, 2023.

Associated Press

CAUTERETS-CAMBASQUE, France (AP) — Tadej Pogacar was not done yet.

Just 24 hours after losing more than a minute to his biggest rival at the Tour de France defending champion Jonas Vingegaard Pogacar showed he was not ready to give up, and revived the suspense at cycling's biggest race.

Two-time champion Pogacar, who was dethroned by Vingegaard last summer, claimed a 10th career stage win on Thursday after a stunning counterattack that dropped the reigning champion in the finale of

the second and last stage in the Pyrenees.

"I would not say revenge, but it's good to win today and take back some time," Pogacar said after an epic day of racing in thin air. "I feel a little bit of relief and feel much better now."

Vingegaard crossed the finish line 24 seconds behind Pogacar following their pulsating duel and seized the yellow jersey, 25 seconds ahead of his Slovenian rival. "I would say it's almost perfect the gap, and it's going to be a big, big battle until the last stage," Pogacar said.

Overnight leader Jai Hindley dropped to third place overall, 1 minute, 34 seconds off the pace.

The brutal 145-kilometer (90-mile) Stage 6 with a mountaintop finish from the southwestern city of Tarbes to the Plateau of Cambasque featured three tough climbs including the legendary Col du Tourmalet.

It was on the steepest part of the famed mountain pass, in thin air, that Vingegaard, riding behind a small group of breakaway riders, started the battle. □



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Is MLB's pitch clock leading to better defense?

By **STEVE MEGARGEE**

AP Sports Writer

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The pitch clock may be bothering players as they step to the plate, but they like it a whole lot better once they put on their gloves and take the field.

While the rule changes put in place this year to speed up the pace of play have garnered plenty of attention for how they've affected hitters and pitchers, some players and managers say the new guidelines also are positively impacting defense.

The pitch clock in particular an idea meant to make it easier for fans to stay focused on the field may be keeping fielders locked in, too.

"I think it's helping defensively a lot, just because you don't have the down time to really kind of walk around," said Seattle Mariners second baseman Kolten Wong, a two-time Gold Glove winner.

"You're not cleaning dirt, you're constantly back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. So, I'm a big fan of it."

The pitch clock adopted this year along with limits on infield shifts and several other rules gives pitchers 15 seconds between deliveries if there are no baserunners and 20 seconds with someone aboard.

There's no doubt that games are faster. The average game length of 2 hours, 40 minutes is the shortest since 1984. Games had lasted an average of at least 3 hours every year from 2012-22.

That change was expected. But some players and coaches say they've been pleasantly surprised by how it's changed things on defense.

Milwaukee manager Craig



The pitch clock ticks down in the top of the ninth in a baseball game between the Texas Rangers and Philadelphia Phillies in Arlington, Texas, Sunday, April 2, 2023.

Counsell, asked this season about left fielder Christian Yelich's improving glove-work, landed on the clock as a key contributor. After ranking among the bottom 10 left fielders last year with minus-5 Outs Above Average, Yelich is third this season with 3 OAA, per Baseball Savant.

"It's definitely not something I'd thought of, but I think it's easier to play defense now the way the game is structured because it's just faster-paced," Counsell said. "That's best for defenders. I don't think hitters like it still, to be honest with you. And pitchers don't like it. But I think it's great for defenders."

Counsell said the lengthy delays between pitches in previous seasons could

make it tough for fielders to maintain their focus.

"It's still your job, but (the slow pace) was making it really hard, I think especially for outfielders," Counsell said.

Arizona Diamondbacks first baseman Christian Walker indicated it was an issue for infielders as well.

"When you've been standing out there for 15-20 minutes and you get a ground ball hit at you, I know that's been a challenge in the past, in long innings, staying locked in," Walker said.

It's hard to find empirical evidence to support or dispute the theory. The league-wide fielding percentage of .986 through Tuesday's games is the highest in the sport's history, but that may not be the

best indicator. Fielding percentages have been rising steadily for decades thanks in part to improved field conditions and equipment, and last year's fielding percentage was .985. The metric also relies on subjective decisions by official scorers and doesn't factor for a player's range.

It's also hard to pull trends from advanced defensive metrics because of the limits placed on infield shifts between the 2022 and '23 seasons.

That leaves it up to the notoriously unreliable eye test to determine whether there's any difference.

"I don't think I've necessarily noticed that," New York Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "My gut, or hearing you ask that ques-

tion and knowing myself as a fielder, I would think it's a good thing. You know, being able to keep it moving. I know we always liked a pitcher that worked fast, right? It felt like you were more on your toes, more alert. So I would think there's something to that, but it's not necessarily something that I've taken away from it so far."

Boone's opinion is something of a consensus.

When players and managers were asked by The Associated Press if they believed the pitch clock had impacted fielding, they often said they hadn't really considered that possibility. Then, after thinking about it for a little bit, many of them at least partially agreed with Counsell's opinion.

"There's more action," Mariners manager Scott Servais said. "They're not on their heels as much, they're ready for the ball to be put in play, things are happening quicker, less standing around."

Brewers infielder Owen Miller has noticed that as well.

"I think just the flow of the game is a lot better," Miller said.

"You just have less time in between pitches, so especially infielders are a little bit lighter and quicker on their feet."

Players and managers across the league see evidence of better fielding. Whether that's because of the pitch clock or due to other factors remains up for debate.

"I think the engagement part helps," Diamondbacks outfielder Alek Thomas said. "You're paying attention, not looking to the crowd. Then again, maybe it's just more athletic people out there making good plays." □